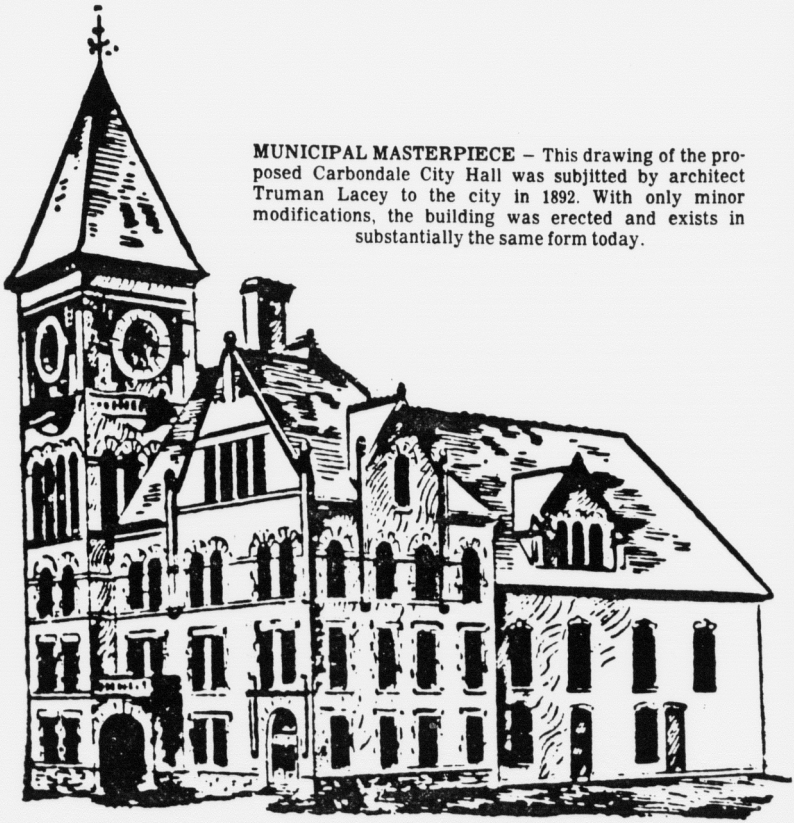
Restore Their City Hall



MUNICIPAL MASTERPIECE – This drawing of the proposed Carbondale City Hall was subjitted by architect Truman Lacey to the city in 1892. With only minor modifications, the building was erected and exists in substantially the same form today.

building and later repoint the stonework. "It will take us ten years if it takes an afternoon," states Powell.

Powell seems ready for the long-term commitment. Born in Carbondale in 1943, he has deep affection for the area. His parents, Helen and Walter Powell, own and operate the Homestead Golf Course just outside the city. Even though Powell works in the corporate finance section of Salomon Brothers in New York City, he returns to Carbondale several times a month to carry on the work of saving City Hall. In addition, together with his brother Donald, he publishes a magazine of local history entitled, "Northeastern Pennsylvania," four times a year.

That feeling for history led the Committee To Restore Carbondale City Hall to planning and presenting a lecture and film series on the area's past during this year's Pioneer Days. The nine programs that were presented were all very successful, many playing to standing room audiences. People who attended the programs often came back with boxes of photos, artifacts and postcards to show the lecturers. In addition, they were frequently able to tell stories of historical happenings or personal family matters which expanded or deepened the presenters' understanding of Carbondale's past. The series led to increased membership in the Committee and to many donations.

The city government itself has not been disinterested. They actively support the efforts of the Committee, recognizing the need for repair and restoration of their historic building. Recently, they provided one of the empty rooms in the City Hall as a headquarters for the Committee's activities. The group has begun to restore that room and hopes to have it finished by November in time to hold a photography exhibit there. "We are pleased to be bringing life back to the third floor, which has been abandoned for years," says Powell.

Why all these efforts? The Committee's literature spells out its reasoning quite clearly: "Carbondale City Hall is a tangible link that we, the citizens of Carbondale, have with the past. Because of Carbondale City Hall, we know that we have roots, deep roots. Because of Carbondale City Hall, our lives, therefore, have stability, our lives have depth, our lives have meaning . . . If we abandon Carbondale City Hall, we abandon a way of life that is unique and that cannot, at any price, be recreated."